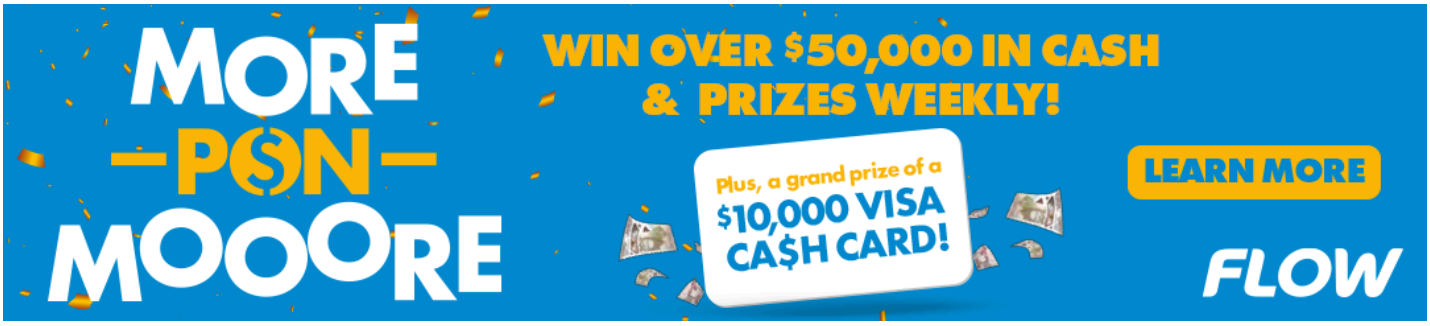
Ad ADVERTISEMENT



Business

Sustainable tourism meeting begins in St. Vincent

News Admin
28 Aug 2019 16:32 AST



Acting Secretary General of the Barbados-based Caribbean Tourism Organization, Neil Walters. (Internet photo)

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent (CMC) — The 2019 Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism (STC2019) opened here on Wednesday amid expectations that the deliberations over the next few days will help with the reshaping of the industry that plays a pivotal role in sustaining the economies of regional countries.

The conference is being held under the theme “Keeping the Right Balance: Tourism Development in an Era of Diversification” and the acting Secretary General of the Barbados-based Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), Neil Walters, said the concept of sustainability, almost unheard of three decades ago “has now become a buzz word, as it should.

“More and more, we realise that this word, hardly spoken in previous generations, is now a powerful focal point since it clearly and succinctly defines how we should manage our own lives, in addition to the world around us,” he said in a video message to the conference.

Walters, whose attendance was affected by the passage of Tropical Storm Dorain through the Lesser Antilles on Tuesday, said that stakeholders must ensure the continued survival of the Caribbean which “sustained life for thousands, maybe millions of years and continues to do so even as life everywhere becomes more complex”.

He said it was necessary to keep in the forefront the theme of the conference given the “delicate balance between our development as the human race and the changes we have caused in the world around us”.

Walter said that as the most tourism-dependent region in the world, there is no doubt that tourism is, to a large extent, the region’s economic lifeblood providing sustainability for many citizens that has also translated, in some cases, to almost phenomenal levels of development in some countries in the last 30 years.

He said the conference was extremely relevant as it provides a platform for the dissemination of good practices which can, if properly implemented, help to bridge the gap and ensure a symbiotic relationship between the tourism industry and the environment in which it functions.

“In this region, like other regions of the world, tourism taps into several different resources, not just the sun, sea and sand. Now more than ever before, visitors are collectors of experiences and not just any experience, but an authentic experience. This places demands on the region’s cultural, heritage, human, financial and natural resources as we seek to refine our tourism product to cater to these ever-expanding needs.”

He said with an industry that straddles such a wide cross section of lives in the Caribbean, a sound sustainable framework for tourism is essential, even as there's need to critically examine previous tourism development and look toward the future.



Attendees at Wednesday's opening ceremony. (iWN photo)

"As you can imagine, these changes, like any other form of change, come at a cost. At this point in time, change is being encouraged when most economies can least afford any additional pull on resources."

Walters said the CTO is committed to providing the good practices to its members, which can be used to achieve the ultimate goal of sustainable tourism development.

"Our approach has been to seek out ways to bring these good practices using the most contemporary information and methodologies which are available," he said, adding that the conference will seek to examine the economic, environmental and socio-cultural pillars of sustainability, thereby offering a holistic approach to addressing the sustainable tourism dynamic.

Walters said that two important initiatives being implemented over the past two years have been the Climate Smart and Sustainable Caribbean Tourism Industry project, funded by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) through the ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Management Programme.

He said this initiative has significantly supported the updating of the Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework, the provisioning of training and tools in disaster risk management, and a regional education and awareness campaign to promote sustainability practices.

The Innovation for Tourism Expansion and Diversification project is another pioneering regional initiative being implemented with financial and technical assistance from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

“This initiative which has a community-based tourism (CBT) focus, will culminate in the provision of a community-based tourism toolkit for Caribbean countries, in-depth primary market research on the demand and willingness to pay for CBT experiences and a project to foster the adoption of digital payments and mobile wallet technologies among Tourism Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.”

The organisers said the conference, which is being held in collaboration with the St Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority, will allow industry experts to address the urgent need for a transformational, disruptive, and regenerative tourism product to meet the ever-rising challenges.

They said that St Vincent and the Grenadines is hosting the event amidst an intensified national thrust towards a greener, more climate resilient country, including the construction of a geothermal plant here to complement the country’s hydro and solar energy capacity and the restoration of the Ashton Lagoon in Union Island.

2 replies on “Sustainable tourism meeting begins in St. Vincent”



RICARDO FRANCIS 28th August 2019 at 7:41 PM

St.Vincent and the Grenadines is an agricultural country first and foremost and will continue to be for all eternity.

Our wealth is in agriculture. The focus is on the wrong policies and agenda. Easy money and the appeal of easy money is a heavy price too pay.

Agricultural money allowed Ralph, the Pharaoh leader to be where he is sitting. He does not like agriculture for it provides independence and does not appeal to the Mustique and